



State Connection

By The Hon Thomas George MP, Nationals Member for Lismore
October 2011

55 Carrington Street, Lismore 2480

www.thomasgeorge.com.au lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au 02 6621 3624

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Events around the electorate

Some events I have attended in the electorate during the past month include -

- Our House Demolition Launch
- Opening of St Vincent de Paul Warehouse
- Railway Wonderland Production
- SCU Graduations
- Football Grand Final
- Sustain Northern Rivers Official Launch of Collaborative Leadership Course
- Liquor Accord meeting
- Kyogle High School Year 12 farewell
- Lismore Cup
- Spring Garden Competition Presentation
- Masters Games
- Lismore Croquet Club 80th Anniversary
- Nimbin Show
- Police Remembrance Day Service
- A tour around the communities West of the Range

Youth Advisory Council

Applications are open for young people with a keen interest in youth affairs to join the 2012 NSW Youth Advisory Council.

The Council is made up of 12 young people aged between 12 to 24 years. It's a direct line of communication between young people and the NSW Government. Their unique insights, views and advice to Government help the development of youth-related policies and programs for regional and metropolitan areas of NSW.

Information and application forms are available at www.youth.nsw.gov.au/yac or email yac@yac.nsw.gov.au. The closing date is Monday 24 October.

Government Reviews

Retail Trading Laws

A discussion paper has been released regarding NSW retail trading laws, seeking comments on how the Government can ensure that the legislation reflects community standards and expectations. Some provisions have been in place since 1962 or earlier.

The discussion paper is at www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au and submissions close 24 October 2011.

Native Vegetation

A statutory review of the Native Vegetation Management Regulations has commenced.

The Government will be looking at where the current regulations can be simplified, can foster a more strategic approach, are sensible, balanced and effective to help ensure the best possible environmental and economic outcomes.

The review is expected to take up to 12 months. Further information can be found at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation or register to participate by emailing native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au.

NSW Vocational Education & Training

Through COAG all states and territories have agreed to principles of reform designed to support a more productive workforce and to give people skills they need to participate in work.

The consultation process which will help guide the direction of reforms, will be undertaken this month and industry, students, community groups, and training organizations and their staff are encouraged to provide feedback.

The discussion paper is available to www.training.nsw.gov.au.

Community Building Partnership

Once again the Lismore electorate has been allocated \$400,000 under the 2011 Community Building Partnerships Program.

Grants will be open to charities, sporting, social and environmental groups as well as local councils and other incorporated not for profit associations. This program is a vital means of improving community facilities in the region.

The types of projects that will be funded include:

- construction of new capital works
- refurbishment, repairs and maintenance to existing capital facilities
- the purchase of capital equipment with a life expectancy of 15+ years that enables the delivery of new and enhanced community services.

Projects must be ready to commence by mid-2012 and be completed by the end of June 2013.

Applications can be made online at www.communitybuildingpartnership.nsw.gov.au by 31 October.

Heritage Volunteer Awards

The annual awards formally recognise and honour individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to heritage.

The awards will be presented within 10 broad categories:

- Aboriginal Heritage
- Archaeological Heritage
- Built Heritage
- Cultural Heritage
- Engineering Heritage
- Landscape and Garden Heritage
- Maritime Heritage
- Movable Heritage
- Multicultural Heritage
- Natural Heritage

Whether their contribution is through education, fundraising, historical research, interpretation, management, physical conservation, promotion or undertaking surveys and studies - this is the community's chance to acknowledge the wonderful work undertaken by volunteers.

The nomination form and list of criteria for the 2011 NSW Government Heritage Volunteer Awards program can be downloaded from the website: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au. Nominations close Friday 28 October 2011.

NSW Sports Volunteer Awards

The people who give freely of their time, skills and passion to support NSW sport will be recognised for the first time with a dedicated annual sports awards program.

Sport at grassroots level is very reliant on volunteers - the mums, dads, former players and other community members who play vital but unpaid roles such as coach, official and club committee member.

Volunteers will be recognised in their own right through a separate award scheme by the State's industry peak body, the NSW Sports Federation.

Nominations close 31 October. More information can be obtained from the NSW Sports Federation website at www.sportnsw.com.au.

Grandparents Day

NSW Grandparents Day will be held annually on the last Sunday of October, with the inaugural day to be held on Sunday 30 October 2011. Grandparents are the unsung heroes in our community, and it's only appropriate they are recognised with a day in their honour.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that the community views its older citizens in a positive light and recognises their capacity for independence. NSW Grandparents Day will be just one way in which we strive to achieve that aim.

Transport for Health (IPTAAS)

The Government has recently announced changes to the Transport for Health Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS).

Patients who need to travel long distances for treatment will receive a massive 30% boost in their accommodation subsidies and a 25% increase in petrol subsidies.

Changes to the scheme:

- For the first time since 2006, there will be an increase in the rates for travel and accommodation assistance for people needing to travel at least 100 kilometres one way for specialist medical treatment.
- Accommodation subsidies increase by 30 per cent, to \$43 per single person and \$60 per double up from \$33 per single and \$46 per double.
- Reimbursement for car travel will now be 19 cents per kilometre, up from 15 cents.
- It will also be easier for patients to stay with family and friends when receiving specialist medical treatment, with a subsidy of \$140 per week, up from \$30 per week.
- Once a patient's IPTAAS subsidies reach \$1000 within a year, the \$40 administration fee will be waived.

Youth Parliament

The YMCA NSW Youth Parliament is a highly prestigious annual forum for young people to learn and participate in the parliamentary process, to represent their electorate on a wide range of issues and to be involved in the writing and debating of a bill. This aims to solve the issues facing the young people of New South Wales.

The program aims to promote youth-led advocacy, active community leadership and legal and parliamentary education.

If you know a young person who may be interested in attending Youth Parliament, please have them contact my office to lodge an expression of interest. I am proud to have been associated with this program for a number of years and has been a wonderful experience for all those students who have previously attended.

More details on the program can be seen at www.ymcasydney.org/activity/youth-parliament.

Go4Fun

Go4Fun has an emphasis on practical, fun learning. The program is designed to deliver sustained improvements in families' diet, fitness levels and overall health. It has specifically been designed for children aged 7-13 years and their parents.

The program begins 10 October, running Monday & Wednesdays at Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre and Tuesdays & Thursdays at Albert Park Public School. Places are limited so call 66219800 or email go4fun@lismorewomen.org.au to see whether your child qualifies and to get more details on how to register.

Youth Census

The Northern Rivers Youth Advisory Council (NRYAC) has released a **Northern Rivers Youth Census** to find out info about what matters most to young people in the region.

The NRYAC is offering two great prizes help get the word out. First prize is an Apple IPAD, and 2nd prize is a ticket to the Byron Bay Blues Festival.

The NRYAC was established in 2011 and includes members from Casino, Kyogle, Ballina, Evans Head, Lismore and Tweed Heads, the group comes together fortnightly for planning meetings and to be a voice for young people in the Northern Rivers.

The information gathered through the Youth Census will be available to everyone through the NRYAC's facebook page, and will be fed into regional, state and national political forums to advocate for more services, support and programs for youth in our region.

The survey can be found on the NRYAC's facebook page and is open until 29 October.

Congratulations

- Arthur Holmes, Murwillumbah on being awarded Life Membership of the Murwillumbah Festival of Performing Arts.
- Alexander Hackett, from Trinity College for being named School-Based Apprentice of the Year at the NSW Group Training Awards.
- Robert Quirk, Murwillumbah has been named as a finalist for The Peabody Environment & Landcare Award at the NSW/ACT Regional Achievement & Community Awards.
- Tamara Lennon, from Trinity College was the regional winner for the North Coast in the *Sydney Morning Herald Young Writer of the Year* competition.

- Koori Mail, Lismore for winning the Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association Award for best non-daily newspaper with a circulation of up to 10,000.
- Anna Chamberlain from Lismore High School, Ruby Morris from Richmond River High School and Chris Riley from Woodenbong Central School have all received the prestigious 2011 Pierre de Coubertin Award from their schools for their embodiment of the ideals of the Olympic movement, sportsmanship and sporting ability.

Media Releases

Following is a list of media releases I have issued during the past month. Follow the link to my website to view in full.

George welcomes NSW continued support for the Rural Financial Counselling Service

Lismore Electorate encouraged to honour 9/11 victims

Richmond River County Council gets \$336,335 grant for flood cleanup

Nominate your local "Heritage Heroes" for a NSW State Award

Community Building Partnership applications open

CSG Inquiry heads to Lismore

Sports volunteers recognised

Patients to benefit IPTAAS boost

Search for Cross Border Commissioner begins

Improved facilities for local education

Licence assistance for aboriginal people in Lismore and Richmond Valley

Thomas George announces \$442,000 for Floodplain Management in Lismore Electorate

The Hon Thomas George MP
Deputy Speaker
Member for Lismore
55 Carrington Street
(PO Box 52)
Lismore NSW 2480
Phone: 02 6621 3624
Fax: 02 6622 1403
E-mail: lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au

THE NATIONALS
for Regional NSW